

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

The Figures have been amended as follows:

- Figure 1 is amended to add an injection port and reference numeral 19 which is identified in the specification at page 10, line 2. Injection port 19 is also present in Figures 6-9, 11A, 12A and 13A.
- Figure 13A is amended to include reference numeral 78 which is described in the specification at page 17 line 21.
- Figures 11B, 11C, 14A and 14B are amended to distinguish the resulting trim piece features from features 68 associated with the mold used to manufacture the trim level pieces.

No new matter has been added to the application by these figure amendments.

Marked up versions of each of the Figures identified above are attached at Appendix A of this Reply.

Replacement copies of each of the Figures identified above are attached at Appendix B of this Reply.

REMARKS

Claims 12-17 and 20-23 are pending in the application. Claims 13-15 and 20-21 and 23 are amended above to correct typographical or claim language errors. Claim 17 is amended above to convert it into an independent claim. Claim 20 is amended above to identify the association between the resin backing and the decorative surface. The specification is amended to correct typographical errors identified by the examiner and/or to correctly identify figure features. Several figures are amended herein to add missing numerical designations and to bring the figures into conformance with the specification. No new matter has been added to the application by way of these specification and claim amendments.

The examiner's specification and claim rejections and objections are overcome or they are traversed as set forth below.

I. THE SPECIFICATION INFORMALITIES

The examiner identified several informalities with the specification. Each of the informalities are corrected by amending the appropriate specification paragraphs in this Reply.

II. THE DRAWING OBJECTIONS

The examiner objected to the drawings for several reasons. The examiner's objections are overcome as follows:

- Figure 1 is amended to include an injection port and numerical designation 19. Injection port 19 is also present in Figures 6-9, 11A, 12A and 13A.
- Figure 13A is amended to include missing feature 78.
- Figures 11B and 11C are amended to identify the resin feature using numeral 76 instead

of numeral 68(a).

- Figures 14A and 14B are amended to identify the trim level piece features as preformed skin covered feature 74 as disclosed in the specification.

III. THE CLAIM OBJECTIONS

The examiner raised several objections to the language used to claim the invention. The objections are overcome by amending each of the objectionable claims as suggested by the examiner.

IV. THE 112, 2nd PARAGRAPH REJECTION OF CLAIMS 13-17, 20 AND 23

The examiner rejected claims 13-17, 20 and 23 under 35 USC 112, 2nd paragraph. The examiner's rejections are overcome by:

- Amending claim 13 to recite the "metal" as being a "metal sheet".
- Amending claims 14-15 to recite the "resin" as a "resin layer"
- Amending claim 20 to recite the structural relationship between the resin and the feature on the decorative surface of the trim level piece.
- Amending claim 23 to recite the "resin" as a "resin backing".

V. THE ANTICIPATION REJECTION

The examiner rejected claims 12-16 for being anticipated by Tanikita et al (USP 5,833,889). Tanikita et al. does anticipate claims 12-16 for at least several reasons. Tanikita et al. does not include a metal sheet as that term is used in the present application. Moreover, Tanikita et al. does not disclose associating a glass filled nylon resin with an automobile trim

level piece. For each of these reasons, Tanikita et al. does not anticipate claims 12-16.

A. Tanikita Does Not Teach of The Use of Metal Sheets

The present application claims articles of manufacture that are trim level pieces including having metal sheet surfaces. The trim level pieces may be manufactured by inserting a formed metal sheet into a mold and thereafter closing the mold and injecting a resin into the mold. (*E.g.*, page 11, line 9 to page 12, line 10 & page 13, line 17 to page 14, line 7).

Tanikita et al. does not disclose using formed metal sheets to manufacture automobile parts. Instead, Tanikita et al. discloses molding a resin material into a particular shape and thereafter removing the article from the mold. (Tanikita et al. Column 4, lines 8-14). Thereafter aluminum is “deposited” onto the formed resin surface. (Column 4, lines 16-18). Because the metal in Tanikita et al. is applied after the resin mold piece is removed from the mold, it is clear that the term “deposited metal” refers to the use of metal deposition processes such as sputtering or vapor deposition techniques to deposit a thin metal layer onto the premolded resin surface. The deposited metal of Tanikita et al. is not a formed metal sheet as is presently claimed. Because Tanikita et al. does not disclose the use of formed metal sheets, claims 12-16 are novel and patentable.

B. Claim 15 Is Novel

Claim 15, which is directed to a resin layer which is a glass filled nylon resin is novel over Tanikita et al. The only glass fiber filled materials disclosed in Tanikita et al. are poly(phenylene sulfide) and poly(butylene terephthalate). Neither of these material are “nylon” resins. For this reason, claim 15 is novel and patentable because Tanikita et al. fails to disclose the use of glass filled nylon resins to manufacture automobile trim pieces.

VI. THE EXAMINERS OBVIOUSNESS REJECTIONS ARE BASED UPON A REFERENCE THAT IS NOT PRIOR ART TO THE REJECTED CLAIMS

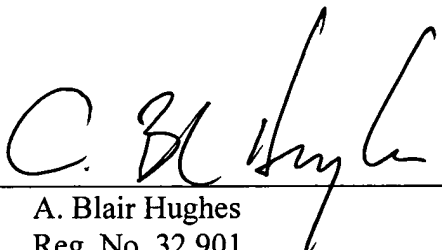
The examiner rejected claim 17 for being obvious over Tanikita et al. in view of US Patent Application No. 2005/0035609. The examiner also rejected claims 20-23 for being obvious over Murano (USP No. 6,455,138) in view of the '609 application.

The examiner's obviousness rejections are without merit because the '609 patent application is not prior art to the present invention. The '609 patent application claims priority to application no. 10/171,936 filed on June 14, 2002. The present application and claims 17 and 20-23 are entitled to a priority date of November 6, 2001. The examiner's obviousness rejections must be withdrawn for this reason.

CONCLUSION

Claims 12-17 and 20-22 are amended above in a manner that are believed to render them patentable over the prior art. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of all pending application claims is, therefore, courteously solicited.

Date: March 9, 2006

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Appendix A

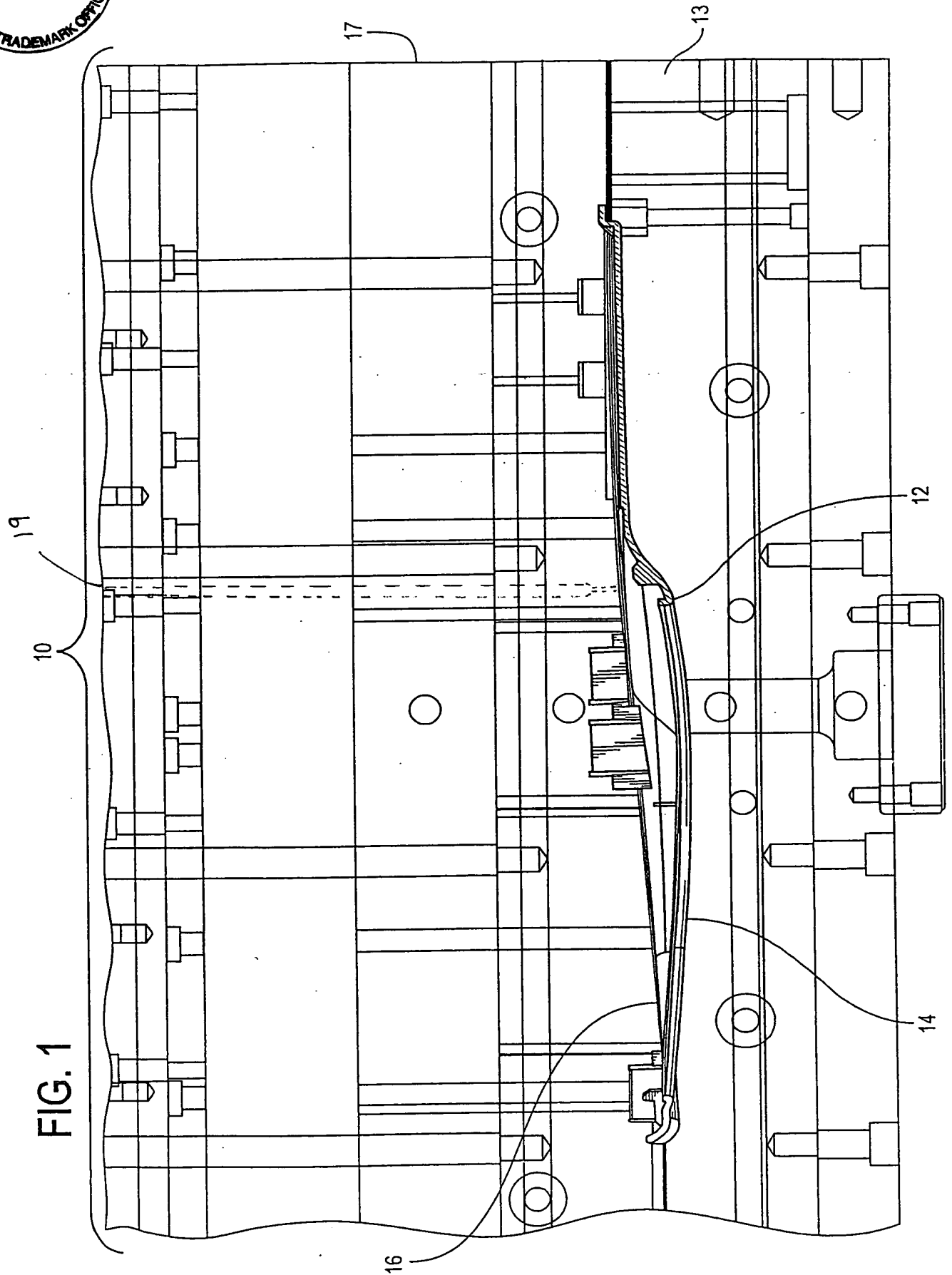


FIG. 11A

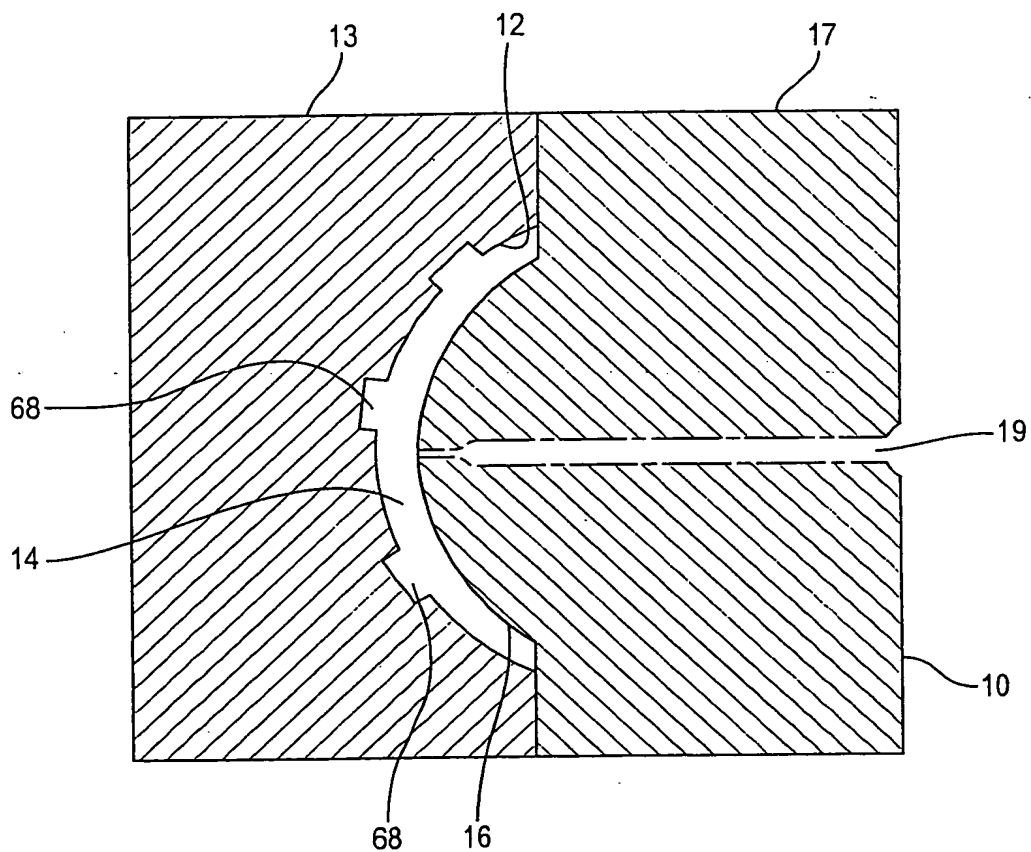


FIG. 11B

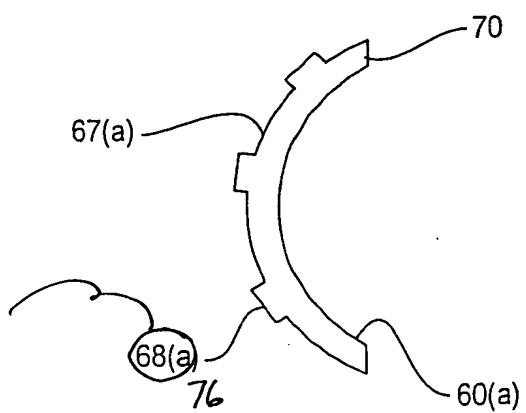


FIG. 11C

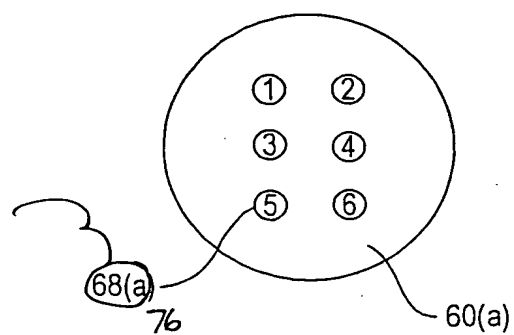


FIG. 13A

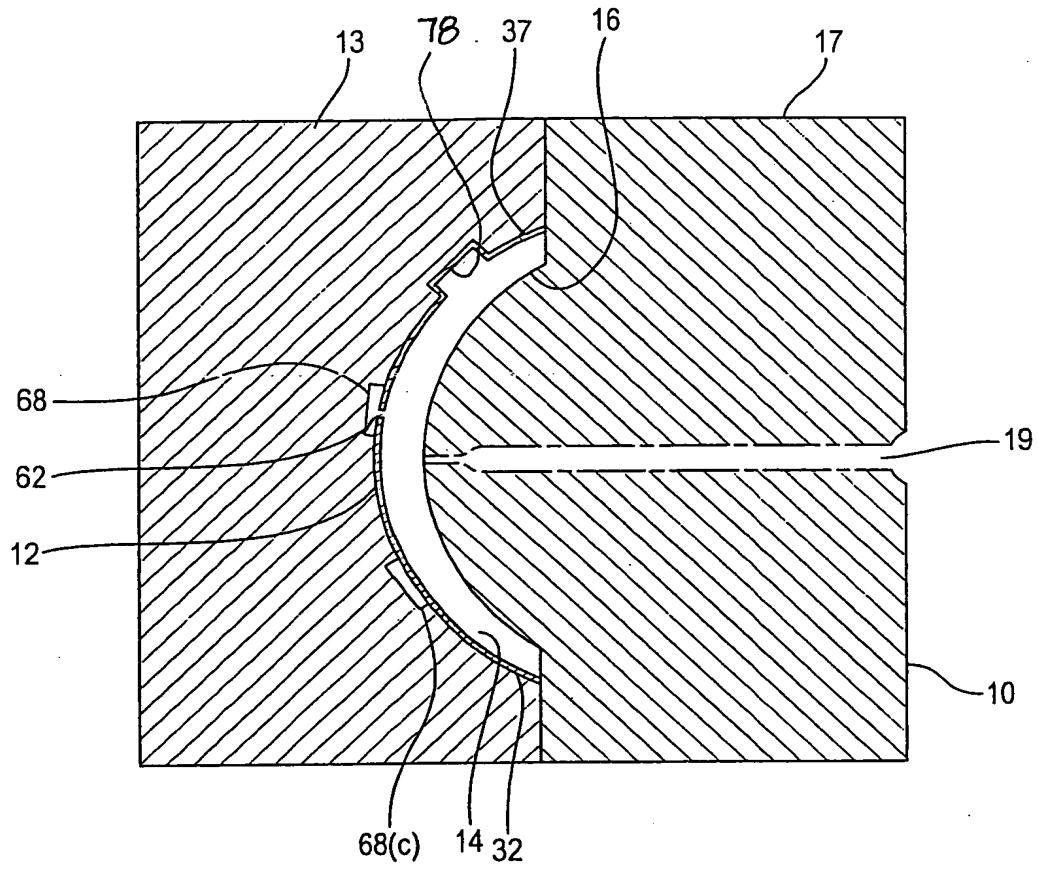


FIG. 13B

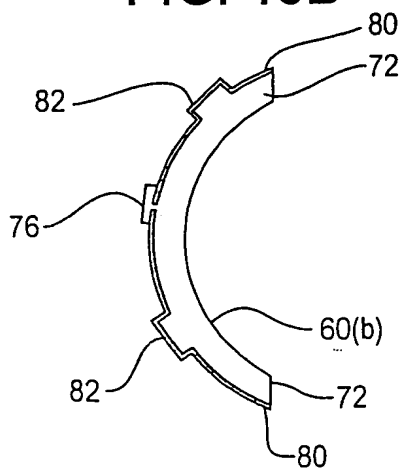


FIG. 13C

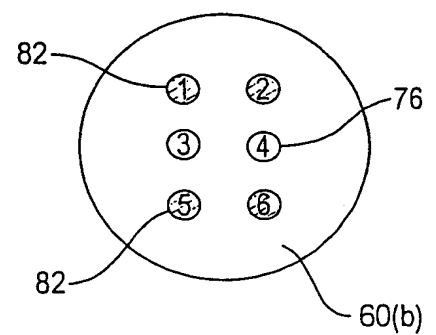


FIG. 14A

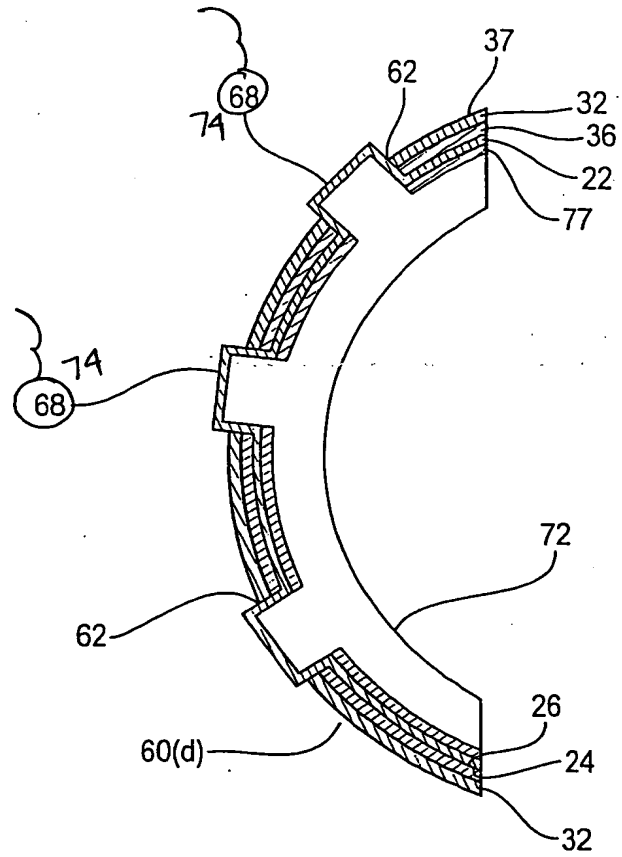


FIG. 14B

